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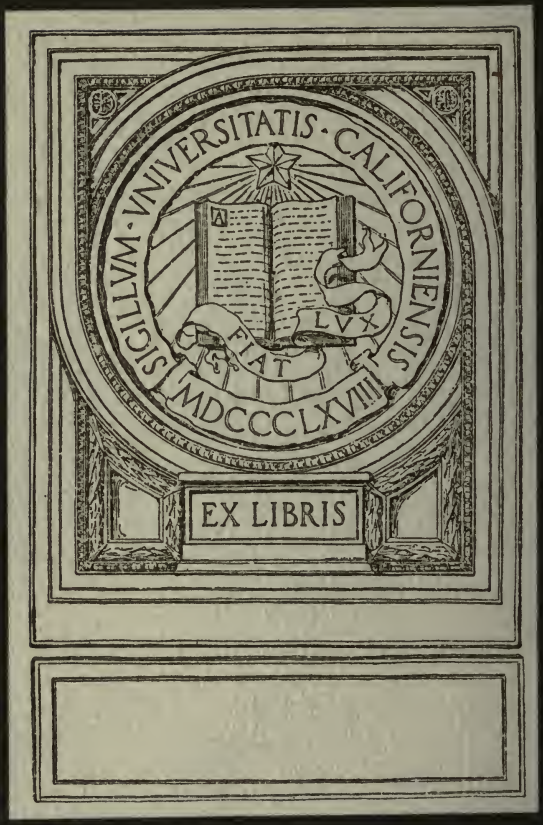
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UNDER THE SWEDISH COLOURS

THE SHRINE OF S. CUTHBERT

AND OTHER POEMS

By FRANCIS A. JUDD

"'S. Cuthbert's Shrine' is a subject well worthy of the celebration it receives n these sonorous lines."—*The Tablet.*

UNDER THE SWEDISH COLOURS

A SHORT ANTHOLOGY OF MODERN SWEDISH POETS

DONE INTO ENGLISH VERSE

BY

FRANCIS ARTHUR JUDD

ARRANGED BY H. M.

WITH A PREFACE BY EDMUND GOSSE

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

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PREFACE

Sweden has followed the general tradition of the northern countries of Europe in the history of its poetry. Its earliest writers of the seventeenth century cultivated the didactic verse then generally prevalent, and were mainly occupied in redeeming the Swedish language from roughness and barbarism. The close of the eighteenth century saw the arrival of Bellman, the improvisatore of dithyrambs, a lyrical writer of the highest originality. Then, like her neighbours, Sweden experienced a change of heart; she passed through the throes of conviction of classic sin, and conversion to romantic righteousness. And all this time her language was becoming more mellifluous, more exquisitely balanced and burnished, more dangerously perfect in its technical softness and smoothness.

For fifty years of the early nineteenth century the Swedes distinguished themselves in several of the highest branches of poetical literature. But by 1850 Tegnér, Geijer and

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Franzén were dead, and the lesser men around them were growing old. Poets continued to appear, but they made less and less impression. Between 1860 and 1870 the decadence of Swedish verse was conspicuous, and many observers believed that it was fatal. The language seemed to have worn itself out, and its facile sweetness to have become mawkish. Of the writers of that time, few are now read or much remembered. Their poetry was orthodox in style and tone, optimistic, commonplace. The best of it was remarkable for beauty of form, and certain pieces have been kept alive, and will probably always exist, by virtue of their delicate workmanship. But these young bards lacked enthusiasm and energy; their pathetic and graceful verses had no force; they cultivated, often in compositions of very trifling melody, what they called "idealism," a pretty wilful ignorance of all the facts of life.

In the midst of this decadence, as though to arrest its ravages, and to make a bridge over from one vivid age to another, there made his appearance a lyrical poet of unquestionable force and fire. This was Count Carl Snoilsky, of whom it is hard to decide whether he was the last of an earlier age or the precursor of a coming generation. He was, at all events,

genuinely inspired. Up to that time, the best colour in Swedish poetry had been but chilly, an arrangement of the hues of the arctic aurora. But Snoilsky—the young Snoilsky—was intoxicated with life and joy, clad with the vine and stained with the grape, a figure like one of the followers of Bacchus, "crown'd with green leaves and faces all on flame," in Keats' glorious ode. This is how Snoilsky appeared, about 1870, to those who watched the signs of the times of Swedish poetry.

This remarkable man was a Swede of Slav extraction, whose ancestors had emigrated from Carinthia in the early part of the seventeenth century. The family was presently ennobled, and became distinguished in Swedish diplomacy. The father of the poet was one of the most conservative of the peers in King Oscar I.'s Upper House. The early life of Count Snoilsky was not distinguished from those of most young noblemen of fortune, who are destined from childhood for the service of the State. He began, however, quite soon to rhyme, and at the age of twenty produced a volume of "Short Poems," under the pseudonym, which he long preserved, of Sven Tröst. This collection is sentimental and melancholy; we see in it the influence of current Swedish verse and some

imitation of Heine. In 1862 he seems to have perceived, by the light of nature, the insipidity and flatness of the "idealism" then prevalent in Swedish literature, and to have determined to practise, if he did not preach, what he called a "healthy artistic realism." His second book, "Orchids," was a collection of fifty poems instinct with sunlight and joy, flushed with the beauty of youthful exuberance. Denmark was at this time far more richly endowed with lyrical writers than Sweden, and it was Snoilsky's good fortune to come under the influence of those enchanting Danish song-writers of an earlier school, Christian Winther and Bödtcher. This little book showed great advance.

In 1864, Snoilsky went to Italy for a residence of many months, and so completed his poetical education. At this, the moment of his highest emotional and imaginative development, we see Carl Snoilsky a sensitive creature of quite irresistible charm, aglow in Nero's Golden House at Rome, brooding in an elegant melancholy under the cypresses at Fiesole, leading the revels at Nemi with cups of Alban wine, or bewitching the rugged Ibsen in his little smoky osteria of the Via Tritone. All this time Snoilsky was living and writing poems, such poems, as had not been sung before, at least

in recent times, under the pallid aurora of a Swedish sky.

The whole note of joy, of physical ecstasy, in the dancing verse of Snoilsky, was like witchcraft. It intoxicated his readers, accustomed to the staid melancholy and affected undertone of his fellow-singers. He stood out in the colourless current literature of his country like a piece of scarlet. The opening stanzas of the book of 1869 struck the note which never wavered :—

> "I bring grapes, I bring roses, I pour out beakers of my young wine. Up every pathway, at every cross-road, I smite my resonant tambourine.
>
> "I do not weary you out of all your patience with insipid visions from the house of dreams. I sing exclusively of what I have seen and felt by the aid of my own five wholesome senses."

And all this in a metre that swings and dances, with its ripple of rhymes, like a breeze in the top of a pine-tree.

Snoilsky returned to Sweden, to be sent away again as *chargé d'affaires* to Copenhagen, where he formed a close friendship with the first of recent critics, Georg Brandes. The present writer, who was in Denmark soon after this date, recalls how enthusiastically Brandes spoke of Snoilsky, and how ardent were his hopes for a complete rejuvenescence of the poetic literaature of the North in the person of the brilliant

young diplomat. However, a series of unhappy personal relationships seems about this time to have interfered with the free development of Snoilsky's genius.

His early career as a poet closed with a volume of sonnets in 1871, after which it was understood that he consented to bow to the anti-poetical prejudices of his family. These sonnets are acknowledged to be the finest hitherto published in Swedish.

In 1881 his New Poems revealed to Swedish readers what may almost be called a new poet, no longer a fiery, spontaneous and dionysiac improvisatore, perhaps, but a bard completely master of a grave, sonorous instrument. Snoilsky wrote in a private letter at this time:—

> "The art of poetry has hitherto been a game to me. Now I am more and more penetrated by a sense of its deep seriousness and significance, and by a conviction that it is the real business of my life."

Engaged in literary work, Snoilsky remained abroad, chiefly in Dresden, until 1885, when, after a visit to Finland, he was persuaded to return for a few weeks' visit to Stockholm. The warmth of the reception which he received startled and touched him. The students arranged a festival in his honour; the King—Oscar II., himself a poet of renown—was

graciousness itself. But Snoilsky could not be prevailed upon to stay ; Dresden, he declared, had become his home. However, the fascination of the Fatherland became more and more overpowering, and few years now passed in the course of which the Snoilskys did not visit Sweden. In the autumn of 1890 his exile of nearly twelve years came formally to an end, when the poet accepted the post of Chief Librarian in the Royal Library at Stockholm. He wrote but little, and but little of that in verse, after his return to settle in his native land. The remainder of his life, spent in the serene and regular performance of his duties, and surrounded by the affection of his friends, was uneventful. His health gave way, and he was removed to a nursing home, where he died on May 19th, 1903.

Although Snoilsky lived far into the revival of Swedish literature, it cannot be said that he showed much comprehension of its aims or sympathy with its movement. That, perhaps, was more than could be expected from a man of his character and antecedents. His own style had been definitely formed in the 'sixties, and there was much in the intellectual revolution of the 'eighties which could but be distasteful to him. With all the beautiful qualities

of his art, Snoilsky was deeply impregnated with the epicureanism which was typical of cultivated thought in Sweden during his youth, and he was not inclined to embrace the violent and sinister innovations of Strindberg and his followers. About 1880, outside his own practice, the vogue of verse in Sweden rapidly declined; the darkest hour lasted from 1885 to 1890, when Swedish poetry was nearer total extinction than it had been for a couple of centuries. The new poetry, which came into being about the year 1891, was manifested almost simultaneously in the works of three very great lyrical artists, in whose hands Swedish verse once more rose to its proper eminence. These three poets were Fröding, Levertin, and Heidenstam. It is worthy of notice that the exhibition of this new energy in Swedish poetry was almost exactly coincident with the return of Snoilsky from exile to take up his official duties at Stockholm.

Few writers defy translation into a foreign language more completely than Gustaf Fröding, who combines with a conscious study of the methods of the Northern folk-song a spontaneous lyrical elaboration of language and a buoyancy of metre which make his poems as difficult as they are fascinating. Fröding, who

was born in 1860, died on February 8th, 1911; for ten years he was in the retirement of a hospital at Upsala. His brilliant and meteoric career was practically confined within the brief years from 1890 to 1898.

In Oscar Levertin there was less phosphorescence and more witchery; he was not such an improvisatore as Fröding, but a finer craftsman. He was a Jew of Östergötland, born in 1862. He had attained great eminence as a prose-writer, particularly in historical criticism, before his superb talent as a poet was revealed in 1891 by the publication of his "Legends and Songs." This volume, which he wrote at Davos while waiting for what he believed would be a hopeless struggle with consumption, produced a great sensation in Sweden. It has been said that the new epoch in Swedish poetry dates from the appearance of that volume. Levertin's use of language is magical, and his lyrics give a poignant expression to those feelings of frustrated passion and disillusioned longing which are so characteristic of the latest generation of Northerners. Levertin died in Stockholm in 1906.

Verner von Heidenstam, who was born in 1859, was the author of early poems of great beauty and originality, but he has now become

principally known as a prose-writer whose monumental simplicity and classic beauty of style leave him without a rival among his contemporaries. Per Hallström, born in 1866, was one of those who were started on their poetical career by the revival of 1891. He is known as a novelist of singularly penetrative fancy, and as a master of detail in observation. The production of poetry, as we understand it, that is to say, writing in verse, is not very abundant in Sweden to-day. The new literature, in prose, is largely naturalistic, but in the new poetry of Sweden there is more than a trace of mysticism, which gives a strange perfume to the realism of such austere writers as Strindberg and Hallström, as well as to the more romantic idealism of Verner von Heidenstam. But, whatever their individual tendencies, these new writers, whether in prose or verse, distinguish themselves by the vigour and the novelty which they have re-introduced into the somewhat exhausted literature of their country, and in this admirable labour it is manifest that Snoilsky was the direct pioneer of them all.

EDMUND GOSSE.

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OSCAR II

KING OF SWEDEN

Hoist the Flag

Hoist the flag revered by every nation,
  Let our colours to the mast-head fly!
Bay-wreathed heroes, flash the salutation!
  Memory's past and Hope's futurity
  With the flag of Sweden soar on high.

In her bosom gleams the sacred token,
  Honour's gold on faith's celestial blue!
Ancient pledge, that ne'er shall be unspoken,
  Of the victor's crown to warrior due,
  So he stand to God, in warfare, true.

Three-forked tongue of dragon bravely mounting,
  Like a Viking signal for the fray!
Gaze around from yon high stem, recounting
  Glories won beneath thy proud survey,
  Where the ocean's blue spreads far away!

Noble memories are of old united
  To our ensign and her watchmen brave,
Telling of new continents they sighted,
  And of vassal realms beyond the wave,
  Which their prowess to their country gave.

Hail, thou witness of our ancient glory!
  Hail, our friend, whate'er the fates decree!
Hail the precept old in Sweden's story,
  Which, though doom or danger round us be,
  Alway bids us ne'er abandon thee!

Soar, true banner of our Land's devotion!
  Feared and honoured thou for ever stay!
And where roll the azure waves of ocean,
  Be unfurled thy colours' proud array,
  Floating free till time shall pass away!

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COUNT CARL SNOILSKY

(1841—1903)

Prelude

I bring my vintage, I bring my roses,
  My wine runs flowing in beakers round;
On path and crossway, till daytime closes,
  I wake the tambour to ringing sound.

No man I weary above due measure
  With vain creations from fancy's store;
My five good senses disclosed the treasure
  That here I offer; I give no more.

Ye ripe in wisdom, ye lords of learning,
  I stand before you with empty hand;
Warm heart of youth, thou art more discerning,
  And thou wilt hear me and understand.

. . . . . .

O how in bondage of form and fashion
  My chafing spirit has weary grown!
My lion, rouse thee to kingly passion,
  Strike out, and leap from thy cage o'erthrown!

The world's attention to-day I borrow,
  Though but a singer of compass mean;
My song in silence shall sink to-morrow,
  When grander voices the throngs convene.

To-morrow all of my song may vanish
  From man's remembrance. It lives to-day;
Secure in freedom no fear can banish,
  In joy and sunlight its fountains play.

Sit down and gather among my roses,
  My vintage new to thy lips shall flow;
On path and crossway, till daytime closes,
  My tambour rings to the sounding blow.

The Night Orchid

Hushed are sounds of life and sylvan voices:
  Drops from leaf to leaf the noiseless dew:
Still no blushing ray the East rejoices—
  Fields are bathed in moonlight's mellow hue.

Here in silence thou alone, white blossom,
  Breathest utterance sweet as thou art white:
Fragrance strays athwart the valley's bosom
  Under dusky vault bestarred with light.

Blossom white, interpret—thou art able—
  Nature's every melancholy throe;
Tongues of men beside thee are but Babel—
  Let thy lips awhile with wisdom flow.

Child of man, whose roving steps here languish,
  Maybe this for thee hath meaning too.
Lay thee down with all thy load of anguish,
  Where thy path is bright with fallen dew.

While the problem of thy life repasses,
  Mystic woof of dreaming and desires,
Hide thy cheek among the dew-wet grasses;
  None here sees, nor aught of thee requires.

Black Swans

Black swans, black swans
Glide in train funereal on,
Seeking in the waters' night
Sunset's faded gleam of light.

Dark as ashes left by fire
Frowns their feathered, rich attire;
Mute their beaks of purple stain
Still an afterglow retain.

White swans cruise by rush and reed-
There on favour's crumbs to feed;
Black swans, where the deeps invite
Out—ye sons of fire and night!

Hidden Union

Lo, on the water two lilies! advances
  Between them the billowy tide;
With a ripple and glitter the waves in their dances
  The one from the other divide.

On the surface they seem at the will of the weather:
  I gazed in the depth and I found
One root, and how two on it rocking, together
  By threads without number were bound.

What the Wall said

Pompeii, city buried deep
  Yields up her store. A mansion here
By spade aroused from age-long sleep,
  Its shroud of soil no more shall wear.
As children waken in a dawn-lit room,
So Naiad forms, set off by purple gloom,
  Renewed in morning light appear.

Here walked I with the Archæologist,
  Whose observation falcon-eyed
A writing soon on the outer wall descried,
  A treasure-trove for scientist!
With pointed style, some vengeful soul enslaved
  Upon the mortar had engraved
Against his master some defaming verse;
  The scandal hardly could be worse.
Whereat my friend: "No truth is left unheard:
"Read here the witness that his times averred."

I let my learned comrade preach at will.
What matter, so my soul were in me still,
With vision sweet to rapture tranced?
A rainbow glory from the frescoes danced

Round statues white and pillar's splendid pride.
Here might, as sentinel on duty, bide
A breath of the owner's spirit. Dear to mind
His memory, who herein a world of beauty shrined!

And this was truth, of value all as good
As aught that on the wall recorded stood.

New and Old Stockholm

Stockholm new! 'tis glare of day:
Noises rude profane the air:
Mansions huge, new streets and places,
Unfamiliar minds and places:
Stockholm traversed everywhere
By the prating telephone!
In this sharp light, lorn and lone
Childhood's memories homeless stray.

Stockholm old! ah, that is night.
City stilled in moonlit calm;
Silvery face of waters shining
Palace and North-bridge outlining:
Wizard twilight's gentle balm
Every flaw from view concealing:
Faint from far such echo stealing
As from Bellman's lyre had flight!

Stockholm old! Ah, that is Rest;
Light-transfigured retrospect;
Vision sweet of night, distilling
Healing draught, each fibre thrilling:
Rich in song, with beauty deckt!
Youth romantic here I roved.
Mirage trembling all beloved,
Rosenbad in starlight drest!

Integrity

One thing, be thou only one thing, of the issue defiant
When thou hast decided.
Dwarf deeds are the fruit of the power of the veriest giant,
So the aim be divided,
Choose now: thy decision we wait, who too long hast delayed it.
Which of twain has thy voice?
Take kernel or shell, joy or struggle—but when thou hast made it,
Be content with thy choice.
There was one in Life's River went seeking for pearls: for another
Froth of pearls was enow.
So soon did it vanish? A truce to complainings, my brother,
Who chose it but thou?

Benvenuto Cellini

" Cellini," said the king, " now play the man !
" Too long with trinkets doth thy forge delay—
" Give us a Zeus, whose like ne'er saw the day."
Francis had spoken—straight the smith began.

I' the mould betimes the seething metal ran !
But heaven ! the bronze was all too scantly gauged.
Would all be failure, and the king enraged ?
What doth Cellini ? Canst thou guess his plan ?

He cast the best results his workshop gave
Into the flames ; there stood the god entire,
A masterpiece—of master works a grave !

So golden dreams of youth oft-times expire ;
Yet Life and Art demand the sacrifice
From all who would in these to fulness rise.

Noli me tangere

Shall I my joy or grief to market hale,
To pass like crumpled wares from hand to hand?
Bright-hued conceits I send at thy command;
The temple of my soul is not for sale.

If me thy wrath have not already banned,
Come in my park! There shade and coolness wait.
Walk among blossoms from a southern land,
And see the sculptures grouped around my gate.

But guide thee o'er the threshold? Nay, my friend!
Sentry of stone his ear may only lend
To a few, shy guests of perfume and of light.

Thou would'st compel me—well, one word I say
Which park and palace sweeps at once away,
And whirling sand alone is left in sight.

The Carnival

No marvel I was in dejected mood,
Who in Life's Carnival was all unknown;
A novice Columbine disdained to own,
The scorn of every fool with sword of wood!

As I amid the motley turmoil stood,
I saw a mask in dress like that I wore.
"Thou art the man I've long been looking for!"
I cried,—and he: "My friend, our luck is good!"

What eager haste we made to go aside,
Where masks no longer should the features hide,
Two kindred spirits afire for close embrace!

The masks are dropt—we both recoil a pace,
And part forthwith; elsewhere the choice must fall.
Such is the fashion in Life's Carnival.

Queen Christina

I

There where the roadway crosses
  The rill's thin silver band,
Is the boundary line, where Sweden
  Borders the Dane's crown land.

By the post of blue and yellow
  Wait children in groups, and there
Are Swede-blue eyes and faithful
  Beaming 'neath flaxen hair.

They have heard how their Queen Christina
  Is to pass full soon that day,
But they cannot believe 'tis in earnest
  She is going for ever away.

Why ever should she forsake them,
  Whose name they so treasure and bless,
When the first thing Mother taught them
  Was a prayer for her happiness?

Had they not for her sake last summer
  Borne grief exceeding sore,
When the bailiff took their brother,
  The eldest, for the war?

And afterward had they not given
  For the tax their finest cow?
No child at the bridge understands it—
  Can she really be leaving them now?

The livelong morning they'd gathered
  Wild flowers and strawberries red,
To prove how to good Queen Kerstin
  The heart of her people was wed.

But hark! on the hill a rumbling:
  In a cloud of dust are descried
The heavy gold state carriage,
  The plumes of the gallants who ride.

From the coach, steel-chill and jarring
  A peal of laughter rung,
And a lady with dusky nobles
  Spake in an alien tongue.

Now gone are coach and horsemen
  Away to another strand;
A lash of the whip, and the baskets
  Are fallen from every hand.

Queen Kerstin, O Queen Kerstin,
  Now shutteth Sweden's heart,
Sweden, where peasants to serve thee
  With life had been ready to part.

II

Why thus a whisper every word that's spoken?
  Why all this silent stealthiness of tread?
Within this room she waits till every token
  Of poor, lone earthly Majesty be dead.

The soul is loth to leave its earthly prison:
  On wrinkled brow the deathly pearl-drops stand;
Like trembling dews that from the branches glisten,
  She shuns the step that proves the unseen land.

And yet it should not be so hard to wander
  Where honour, power and joy before are gone—
How poor thou art, Christina Alexandra,
  Now life's great tragedy is all but done!

Ne'er more shall ring thy golden bounty plighted
  To flattery's flute-notes and thy poet's lay.
The sound dies, and therewith, by hirelings slighted,
  Dies she who once in Swedish hearts had sway.

She hears, through mist that seems all sense to smother,
  How greed her dowry shares within her home:
How cardinals are whispering one another:
  How bells ring on in this big city, Rome!

Her room is full with ghosts of fevered mood;
  When one is past, a new as soon appears:
The great one in his buff-coat dyed with blood—
  Some servitor of long forgotten years.

Ah, now some country view, with birches green!
  Sweet river-side: a bridge athwart is thrown;
The other bank from sight the shadows screen—
  Ne'er saw she this? Ah, yes, she might have known!

Out of the darkness all her instincts long
  To cross that bridge: an unseen hand detains.
But listen, what a wondrous burst of song
  Rings from far verdurous strand in tuneful strains!

Nay, this is more than dreaming: who should dare
  To sing without in teeth of order stern?
From heavy slumbers suddenly aware,
  What sounds are these? the dying Queen would learn.

"Merely a Swedish student," they reply,
  "Who rests awhile outside upon the stairs.
"It is his morning hymn he carols high;
  "Say but the word, and we will quell his airs."

"Nay, let him be—I care not," she replies,
  And by the simple music rocked to rest
Falls backward on her bed with closing eyes.
  'Tis light again. The bridge is crost. 'Tis best.

Among themselves the crimson prelates muttered
  As doubtfully they felt the lifeless hand.
Christina Alexandra, Sweden uttered
  The song that lit thee to the other strand.

VIKTOR RYDBERG

(1828—1895)

Bethlehem's Star

(*From* "THE ARMOURER.'

Shine over lake and strand,
  Beam from afar,
Where in the Eastern land
  God lit a star.
Children and shepherd-folk,
Readily follow thee,
  Bethlehem's Star.

Night over Palestine,
  Night over Zion!
By the far western line
  Fadeth Orion.
Shepherds afield who roam
  Sleep by the hill,
Children within the home
  Dreaming are still.
Waked by angelic quires
  Rise they, and o'er them
Shining the Star inspires
  Moving before them;
Seeking an Eden fair
  Whither it leads them
Lambs and cots left where
  Nobody heeds them—

On, in the spite of each
  Hindrance to mortals,
Till they in lustre reach
  Paradise' portals.
Lips they have loved invite,
  Arms draw them near;
Whispers of welcome light
  Sweet on the ear.

Star, thou hast guided them
Home to their Bethlehem.
Children and shepherd-folk
Follow thee readily,
  Radiant Star!

Theologia

(*From* "THE CANTATA.")

Doubtest thou that in the distance smiles for thee
the promised land?
Faintest thou with thirst, declining hopeless on the
burning sand?
Lo! the rock gave forth its fountain at the blow of
Moses' rod;
Forward, then, through waste and desert, second
Israel of our God!
Still the rod is thine,—upraise it, and the sacred
springs unlock.
Never fails the heavenly wonder: where thou goest,
goes the Rock.
Bend thy knee before its fountain, in its crystal
waters lave!
Pilgrim, feel the life within thee welling up beneath
its wave!

RECITATIVE.

He who doubting sank and lingered sadly brooding
by the way,
Then once more his banner seized and bore it on
without dismay,

Shall not fear, though in our sight a thousand suns from heaven were swept,
Though the stars as ears in harvest by the scythe of Time were reapt.
Golden dreams and lovely aims the vengeful reach of Time defy:
Such a yield escapes his plunder: 'tis in garners stored on high.
Ransomed of the Lord, go forward! On to gladness, into rest!
With the music of eternal mystery, throbbing in your breast.

The Athenians' Song

(*From* "Dexippos.")

Death is his glorious meed, who for Greece, in his right to defend her,
Falls in the van for her sake, dying for city and home.
Therefore with bosom afire haste thou in thy joy to surrender
Life for thy country, and save far generations to come!
Onward, ye youths, march onward in lines close serried, unshaken.
Never a fancy of flight, never a shudder of dread!
Overthrow waits on the ranks in their shame and confusion o'ertaken,
Where at the posts of the young, veterans' life-blood is shed.
Seek, O thou warrior youth, in the front of the battle thy duty,
While still of Spring on thy locks lingers the blossoming wreath.
Plain, while thou livest, to men be thy valour, to women thy beauty;
Fallen in the fray, thou shalt be beauteous still in thy death.

The Goths' Song

In northern woodlands
The pine-trees nod,
O race of Woden,
War-rousing God!
Go down where cypress
And cedar sigh,
'Mid slaves unmanly
Content to die.
Lull them to slumber
With song of the sword;
To bergs auroral
Bear golden hoard.
To the warrior's cairn,
To the hero's mound,
Where fir-trees shadow
The darkling ground.

The Bells

Set high above Time's ocean, surging restless
everywhere,
There stands a tower transparent built of crystal
ether-clear.
Far sunk in deeps unfathomed, her broad founda-
tions lie
Beyond the ken of wingèd thought or range of
human eye.

She stretches wide her ramparts through the starry
blue afar;
And high above the firmament, where never moves
a star,
She lifts her dome through boundless tracts and
regions infinite,
And dizzy grows the baffled thought that fain would
scale that height.

Two bells within the hollow of its rounded summit
sway.
The one is cast from sunbeams caught from early
dawn of day:
To the breeze of thought's high melodies the golden
clapper swings,
And with the breathing of the world in gentlest
measure rings.

She rings in gentlest measure, and her rich, compelling tone
Floats downward through the universe and thrills from zone to zone.
Till at last those pure vibrations reaching earth may find a goal
In the glow of purple twilight, and in each aspiring soul.

So calls she on these wistful souls with love's profound appeal
In dreams to plan the beautiful, in toils to prove it real:
To remember every evening, when the west is tinged with fire,
The far untrodden realms of truth, and isles that crown desire.

She rings in passioned longing for the hallowing of the dawn,
When to one great Communion every race on earth is drawn,
Where every throe of anguish may be softly lulled to rest,
And every tired head recline on some belovèd breast.

She sounds her sweet entreaty, and her mellow accents long
To attune their clear vibration to the people's freedom-song,

To proclaim those blessèd tidings pealing out o'er sea and sod:
Lo, the world becomes God's kingdom! Lo, mankind has found his God.

But poured within that other's mould, and hardening into stone
Is darkness, once on Chaos' breast in sombre quiet strown.
The heavy clapper rests: she hangs without a call or cry,
And her cup is like the vaulted void of night's encircling sky.

Down in the tower-arcade below, there sits he, dark in mind,
A demon, with his fingers round the sturdy bell-rope twined—
Sits moveless as a statue, looking down with dismal threat
To history's rolling waves that round the tower's foundation fret.

Sometimes they roll in sun-fire, and sometimes the sun is hid,
But once should Ocean's wide expanse of every ray be rid,
His last, high wave be crushed to foam in breaker's echoing roar,
Who dreams of omen all too bright in heaving bosom bore,—

Should black Despair on human need with wings
of famine brood,
And tongues be mute for favour's dole, and Freedom's lyre for food—
And the heart of youth be grown so cold, without a pang it knows
How from the world the good departs, the sacred glory goes :—

Then up the demon rises, clinching tight his hand around
The sturdy rope, and thunders out a peal of furious sound,
Then while the night-bell's awful swing its giant circuit makes,
The Earth is split with rending noise and to her centre quakes.

OSCAR LEVERTIN

(1862—1906)

The Artist

O Mountain mine, loved solitude,
  Who else but thou has known
The secret throbbings of my heart,
Or been to me the friend thou art,
  Who of all friends alone
Hast called and heard and understood
The soul that sought thy solitude?

My friends, whose joy was never mine,
  Whose woes I never knew,
Ye called me yours and spoke me well,
Yet never had ye learned to spell
  What passed from me to you.
Nor dreamed the plummet and the line
To sound the depths of me, were mine!

When life was frozen at the fount
  As yonder snow-crowned hill,
Ye called me warm: when solar flame
Burned me, ye made my love a game
  And said my heart was chill.
To Lowland sons of what account
The Mountain's Sermon on the Mount?

Hail, Mountain mine—proud summit, hail!
  With sun and ice agleam.
Come, Solitude, the seer's delight,
Be thou my guest on mountain height
  And share with me my dream:
Sweet visions hid in distant vale,
And mirrored stars in waters pale.

Free as ethereal realms of blue
  By dream-sails unexplored,
Lofty as Faith that never failed
A God who held His secrets veiled,
  The God whom Faith adored—
O Mountain spell, each thought imbue
With high Disdain's empyreal hue!

Burnt Offering

Not a plant, though it sprang from the noblest of seed,
  But with lapse of the season is sere:
What from fire had birth, in fire is decreed
  To consume undecayed on the bier.
On the stroke of the hour let the sacrifice burn;
  Let the glare of it redden the night!
He who saw the water to vintage turn,
  Should it pale, must away from the sight.

A child who is sobbing—his piteous wail
  You can hear in the depth of your soul.
If a thousandth part of Love's honour fail,
  The death-blow is struck at the whole.
You may darn and repair with a spider's thread
  The rent on a butterfly's wing,
But the woof that is woven of dreams that are dead
  No skill to renewal shall bring.

All else can be worn, grow common and gray,
  And age in the work-a-day pressure;
But a single scratch on a gem's pure ray—
  And the glory is sped from the treasure.
The grandest tales are the soonest told;
  From the world is estranged what is pure:
And a stainless beauty of undimmed gold,
  This only Death can insure.

VERNER VON HEIDENSTAM

(1859)

Thoughts in Solitude

(*a*) The Spark.

A spark dwells in my soul's most inward shrine,
Which might I bring to light, my aim were won.
My first, my last, my life, this spark of mine!

Eluding fire, consumed by thee I languish,
Yet, reft of thee, my riches all were gone.
This tiny spark—it is a lifetime's anguish.

(*b*) The Crucifix.

On Harz in the gloomiest woodland lane
Stands grey and lofty a rood of stone,
And whoso chances on this, alone,
        He pauses and bursts into tears.

In lashing scorn I have found no gain.
Wake, eyes to beauty, and tongue to praise!
What avails me hatred, when I must gaze
        On a cross by the wayside in tears?

The Heart's Secret

How readily cheeks of men grow hot!
Swift to be judges, though knowing not
The numerous voices by which are measured
The secrets of hearts, in their strongholds treasured.
Each heart has a door to a mystery—
The chamber is locked, none finds the key.
There's a lamp within, and the oil that feeds it
Is the secret that dies with the man: none reads it.
Each goes on his road, with that keyhole's ray
On his sleep by night, on his walk by day.
'Tis the light of his steps, though he wander far;
To the goal of his journey his guiding star.

The Home

O for that path where grasses grow,
  Anigh my greenwood home,
That hillside cot, where long ago
  A lad I loved to roam!
No apples under alien trees
  Are half so sweet and red:
No corn is rocked by whispering breeze
  So soothingly—no bed
Prepared like that they made for me
When evening's bell chimed o'er the lea.

Where live my memories? now what roof
  Gives shelter to my dead?
Till years, that weave of sombre woof
  My fate, their length have sped,
What other haunts are mine but where
  Those sacred memories dwell?
There glide I ghostlike; tread not near
  To break the lingering spell!
Though locked the rusty gate is kept,
  And a mat of withered leaves
Lies at the door where winds have swept
  Beneath the crumbling eaves—

Still there I stay; it is my home;
  Voices I never knew
May laugh; beneath the bridge may foam
  New rills where rushes grew:
Still with the voiceless be my lot
  Who to my homestead cling,
Myself a memory forgot,
  Of Memory's realms a king!

Despiser, never say the old
  Have closed their eyes in death,
As buttercups may lose their gold
  Or mignonette its breath!
Nor yet that from the heart a name
  So easily is thrust,
As thou from off thy window frame
  Canst rub a little dust.
As spirits of power they rise divine
  Out of the deathless past,
O'ershadowing all this world, and thine
  Where'er thy lot be cast.
Thence homeward fly thy thoughts by night,
  Like swallows to the nest!
Our home! it is our castle's height;
  We raised it—and we rest.
'Tis all our world, and this alone
In this poor world we call our own.

GUSTAF FRÖDING

(1860—1911)

A May Song

Loud carol the songsters their vernal strain,
  Glad hope a new roundel devising,
But, now at my window I stand again,
  In my throat the tears are rising.

All Earth is in blossom; the copses shine;
  Sweet cowslips the meadow-green smother;
All Earth is beauty and all is mine,
  The child of Earth my Mother.

And roseate-red are the clouds; the dew
  In morning mist is making
A world all young, and a world all new!
  But my heart with sobs is breaking.

Too clearly thou comest, too early, O Dawn,
  Too freshly thy dew-drops are falling,
Too bright is thy ray for a life just drawn
  From shades of death enthralling.

Trianon

Ball, tattle and laughter from green recesses
  And over the lawns of Trianon:
Small shepherdess-hatted Marchionesses—
  Smiling they hum, Lonlaridon.

High-heeled come tripping the Marchionesses
  To innocent frolic and rural jest
For stiff-necked gallants in shepherd dresses,
  Vicomte Lindor, Monseigneur Alceste.

But suddenly
From trunk hard by
Broad, ugly, base
Peeps forth a face.

Loud screamed the Vicomte, "Voyez la tête-là!"
  Monseigneur's ball goes spinning wide.
Then "Qu'est ce que c'est?" and "Quelle est
    la bête là?"
  Sounded in chorus from every side.

Heads toss in scorn from the thing unsightly,
  Noses are haughtily turned in the air.
Small marchionesses go skipping lightly,
  The ball flies briskly from pair to pair.

But with low mutter
And lumb'ring gait
Goes the son of the gutter,
Jourdan Coupe-Tête!

Ingalill

Inga, little Ingalill, sing to me thy lay!
Forlorn my soul without thee pursues its lonely way,
  The child of solitude and sadness.
Inga, little Ingalill, sing to me thy lay;
In these deserted castle halls it is my staff and stay
  To hear its gentle ring of gladness.

Inga, little Ingalill, sing thy lay to me!
Then thine the half my kingdom and my castle's gold
    shall be;
  Thereto, sweet heart, my troth I plight thee.
My castle's gold, it is my love, and all to thee is owed,
And half of all my kingdom, it is half my sorrow's
    load;
  Say, Ingalill, doth sorrow fright thee?

King Lily of the Valley

King Lily of valley and glade,
  King Lily is white as the snow;
For his bride the Princess Lily Maid
  Is the lord of the valley in woe.

King Lily is sad, and his head
  Droops heavily, tenderly down;
Pale gleams in the gloaming are shed
  From his silvery helmet and crown.

By the bier of fine gossamer threads
  Full censers of fragrance are swung,
Slow rises the incense and spreads,
  Till its scent through the forest is flung.

From the boughs of the birch as they sway,
  From the rocking abode of the breeze,
Steal notes of a sad little lay
  To the sigh of the greenwood trees.

From the valley throughout his domain,
  The voices of whispering leaves
To the bounds of the forest complain
  How the king in his capital grieves.

PER HALLSTRÖM

(1866)

Inspiration

Fired by joy or sorrow
  The poet's song must ring,
Free, as tear-drops suddenly
  From the eye-deeps spring.

Fired by joy or sorrow
  To joys how few belong
Such fine, ethereal qualities
  As make the source of song!

Abler far is sorrow,
  When souls are sore distrest,
To grip the heart-strings and compel
  The music from the breast.

Abler far is sorrow,
  For joy our vision blurs;
Wide enough her warm embrace
  To clasp the universe.

The deeps of her own spirit
  She scans with searching eyes,
And in the depth of others' gaze
  Her mirrored self descries.

Lines

Was there stifled a longing in somebody's heart
  When I bore off my treasure?
Did the tears to the eyes of the sorrowing start
  As the price of my pleasure?
Then away with it, useless encumbrance! my back
  Bends no more to the burden.
Good-will must be twined with my laurels—the lack
  Robs the wreath of its guerdon.

If as fresh as in April the woodland's array
  Were this world and its treasure,
I would grasp all it offered and none should gainsay
  Me my lust of full measure.
But to swoop as a hawk on a wren in a snare—
  That I leave to another.
All your nectar is gall an you give not his share
  To your thirstier brother.

I have sighed as I mused on how little the joy
  Life is able to tender,
But I took as a gift—it was free of alloy—
  High, purple surrender.

For the poem and dream that are born of my soul
  In the song that I sing you,
With the free-flowing sunlight and breeze, are the
    whole
  Of possession I cling to.

ERIC AXEL KARLFELDT

(1864)

Times of Waiting

What so sweet as times of waiting,
Days of spring-flood, hour of budding?
May-day never spread a glory
  Such as gleams from April sky.
Melts the ice upon the pathway,
While the cool and mossy woodland
  Calls with many a deep-drawn sigh.
All the summer's wealth I'd barter
For the earliest blades that shimmer
In a shaded pinewood valley,
  With the throstle warbling by.

What so sweet as times of longing,
Lingering seasons of betrothal?
Spring hath never such a splendour
  As a secret loved one near.
Meet—but soon asunder faring,
Live to dream with sweetest daring
  All the joy that Life can bear!
Golden fruit, let others shake it,
Wiser I forego to take it;
Vigil will I keep, nor break it,
  While the trees are budding there.

A Knight of the Road

"Thy name and country, wayfaring one?"
"I neither will tell you, nor can.
"No home have I, I am nobody's son;
"Behold me a desolate man!
"Stranger from far my way I won."

"What faith professing? What is thy creed?'
"I know 'tis but nothing I knew;
"Still, though I rode not orthodox steed,
"My faith and my conscience were true.
"God was my Guide, His will my heed."

"How went thy life?" "'Twas tempest and strain
"And strife, all woven together:
"Fooled longings, ardour kindled in vain:
"Stray sunbeams in showery weather.
"Yet to have lived I hold a gain."

A Farewell Song

Press now the dear hands of the true one that ever
  Was stay to thy steps, to thy goings a guide;
The chill creeps up from the banks of the river,
  And daylight is wearing to eventide.

By lips that breathe of affection glowing
  May lips as faithful thrice o'er be kist,
Since forth of the deep comes darkness flowing,
  And the skies are shrouded in lurid mist.

Let doubts and quarrels and wrongs all vanish,
  And melt in the fire of a last embrace;
Night-clouds uncertain roll on to banish
  The one from the other, twin hearts of one race.

At nightfall waken the roving breezes,
  And lightnings glimmer on space afar;
The storm is near us that roughly seizes
  In Fate's sieve shaking us, chaff that we are!

Now questioning trembles, and doubt repining
  Asks, "When he is gone, will the dear one forget?'
"Shall cheeks be burning and eyes be shining,
  "And a year that is new be the same to us yet?"

Forget? nay, Remembrance requires no telling:
  But yesterday's sunshine no power can restore.
We shall dream, you and I, in our separate dwelling
  Of all that shall never come back to us more.

A flower of farewell from your window reach me,
  O mother, and give for my journey God-speed!
Methinks the sad eyes of your piety preach me
  Some psalm from the Bible you taught me to read.

Each soul that hath longed in the glooms of this valley
  Shall join on Mount Zion the jubilant throng;
Each passion that failed on the tongue shall rally,
  Set free in the flow of Eternity's song.

ZACHARIAS TOPELIUS

(1818—1898)

Salami and Zulamith

I

Great, great gulf, pitiless, cruelly wide!
Awful, measureless space, yawning for ever betwixt
Two stars, viewless to man, destined for ever to bide
Islanded where the extreme bounds to Creation are fixt.
Forlorn on their several orbs repine twin, human souls,
Who ages agone on this planet clung to each other as one.
For a joy such as theirs can it be the relentless death-knell tolls?
Ay, the stars are bewailing what Sin, Night, Sorrow and Death have done.

II

Hard, hard doom!
  Ruthless as iron sky
Deaf to Zulamith's anguished
  Yearning for Salami.
Long, long cry!
  For a Power that is stronger than Fate,
Home from their exile to bring
  Two souls that are separate.
Far, far joy!
  That farther each moment flies,
As the loss they can never endure
  They painfully realise.
Blind, blind dark!
  Where a world flowed over with light.
And 't is O for a gleam that will pierce
  These fathomless oceans of night!

III

Essence divine—it is Love! and the love in these human hearts
Shed in the darkness the ray they had longed for, and lo! it was theirs.
Light—'t is the substance availing to bridge the division that parts
Two souls, and unite once more what was sundered thro' countless years.
Zulamith, build thee thy bridge! Thou too, from the verge of thy sun,
Salami, bridge with thy love-light the distance that true-love disdains.
Have a mind to the labour, ye lovers, and finish as you have begun
With the Light of the Love that has conquered the Kingdom of evil, and reigns.

IV

So from their separate stars
  They toiled for a thousand years,
That seemed to them but a few days
  For the love these lovers shared—
Till their bridge in the firmament shone
  As the rainbow, and sudden fears
Took hold on the Cherubs, amazed
  At the thing these lovers dared.
Straight to the Presence on high
  They winged their celestial flight.
" Lord, hast thou marked these twain,
  What is sprung of their rash employ!"
But the universe beamed as He smiled,
  With a new and a wonderful light.
" What Love in My world hath built,
  That I swear I will never destroy."

V

One bridge wrought of light, and upon it
  Two lovers who journeyed from far
Are met, and their speechless reunion
  Is crowned with the birth of a star.

VIKTOR RYDBERG

Longing

He longs and longs again; his hungered soul
Cries out his nameless yearning: everywhere
A wanderer, vowed to reach some viewless goal,
Or one who, in pursuit of phantom fair,
Puts forth his hand but only grasps the air,
As glancing by, it mocks his vain desire
To make it captive: power it has to wear
A myriad shapes, changeful as flickering fire,
Which beckon on ahead, then back as far retire.

He strays o'er field and meadow, and descries,
Peeping above a wealth of waving corn,
The flower's tall blue that rivals summer skies,
And nods the smiling courtesy of the morn.
He reaches forth an instant; then forlorn
Gazes on nothing with a wistful eye,
Save on the spot where one brief joy was born,
To live a moment in his heart—and die,
Sunk and for ever drowned in billowy seas of rye.

He gazes towards the setting sun. Behold!
On walls and turrets of the evening sky
A crimson standard bordered with fine gold,
By spirit hands mysterious raised on high!

He hears an echo languish brokenly
From dreaming upland and from distant wold;
Somewhere the tumult of the chase goes by!
Else 'twas a note had strayed from legend old,
Where winds his silver horn some faery hunter bold.

He treads the streets and crossways of a town
That memory names not: once again there streams
That full, rich peal of organ music down
From out a minster's gothic dome of dreams.
Now far away the stroke of hammer seems
To ring the secret of some vast intent
In the mind of him who drives it: he esteems
His labour light on such high service spent—
Some mighty fane he builds for future ages meant.

The dark and then the dawning; first a hush,
And then a whisper, a low, mysterious sound
From all-engirdling ocean: 't is the rush
Of waves invisible surging far around
Star-islets paling to the morn. Spell-bound
He gazes upward where his heart aspires,
If haply there the vision may be found
Whose secret everywhere his soul enquires—
That undiscovered Quest where centre all desires!

Dreaming he watches an eternal sea
Engulf the years within its boundless wide;
Then Spring with all her glory of wood and lea,
As fleeting as the rill he roams beside,

Is mirrored in the flow of the silvery tide.
The Spring in either of two human hearts
Sees imaged there her twin. Ah! will it bide,
Or can it be Love's season only starts,
To bid one long farewell when Nature's Spring departs?

Through summer meadows tapestried with flowers,
On through autumnal woodlands golden-dyed
The river speeds, and swirls the russet showers
Of leafage sere to ocean dark and wide.
Stay, dream, a moment! On the other side,
What there—ah, what? None, maybe, understood,
Nor ever shall, the Quest for which he cried;
Yet must he seek it still in vagrant mood,
And till the Real be won, its shadow be pursued.

If came he to the world's remotest bound,
Which verges on the realm of nothingness,
Where no road leads, and where the unfruitful ground
Shrinks from the sheer abyss—his tongue should bless
The Power at last that loosed it to express
What made within his heart so long abode,
His yearning, satisfied; and echoless
His call should travel on, from where he trod,
Throughout the boundless void and awful silence: GOD!

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ERRATUM

Page 30, line 4, *for* "places" *read* "faces."

*No. 74. [illegible]
No. 75. IN THE NET [illegible]
*No. 76. THE FLAME. By [illegible]
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